

Church, Tyler, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Father God, how loving, how gracious, how wonderful, how good, how vast are Your methods for bringing us ever so close to You so that we might experience Your awesome power of love and care for us as a Nation.

Lord God, we pray today that You will let common ground and middle ground be the order of the day for the common good of our Nation.

Loving God, bless the Members of the people's House. Give them wisdom and understanding to be a blessing to our house.

Merciful God, in times like these, oh, precious Lord, take their hands, touch their hearts, speak to their souls, that the Members of this body may be bold servants of this Nation.

Our eternal God, may all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory, forever and ever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SARBANES led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND JEROME R. MILTON

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, our visiting chaplain today is Reverend Jerome R. Milton, pastor of the Greater New Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas.

As a small child, he was left with his brother and sister in a rundown motel in San Diego to die. They were placed in a horrific orphanage, where despicable abuses were inflicted, ultimately resulting in the suicide of his siblings.

Jerome was eventually placed in the home of Dadie Florence Brown, the 14th foster home. This uneducated but strong-willed lady told young Jerome that, despite all he'd been through, "Don't allow your abuse to be your excuse." She knew God would make him something special, and she prayed for him every day.

Jerome could run fast and play football well and got a scholarship to do

both at UCLA. As he says, God moved him from foster care to people care. He and his wife, Charlene, have nine children, six of them adopted.

In addition to being a pastor, he's the head track coach at Gorman Catholic High School, leading his teams to 10 State championships, and has been Tyler's Citizen of the Year with the T.B. Butler Award. His work has spanned race, religion, all types of barriers, and he has blessed so many lives, including mine.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS of New Hampshire) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 12, 2012.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
The Speaker, U.S. Capitol, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 12, 2012 at 11:08 a.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4014.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4367.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 2467.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3319.

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 6328.

That the Senate passed S. 3564.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S FISCAL CLIFF PLAN CALLS FOR \$1.2 TRILLION IN NEW SPENDING

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, during his campaign for reelection, the President called for a balanced approach to solve the fiscal cliff crisis. Unfortunately, the plan his administration submitted to Congress does not include the spending cuts necessary to address our Nation's \$16 trillion national debt.

According to Senate Budget Committee Ranking Member JEFF SESSIONS' staff's calculation of data from the Congressional Budget Office and the Office of Management and Budget, the President's plan suggests that

roughly 75 percent, or \$1.2 trillion, in new revenue be directed to new spending instead of deficit reduction.

The fiscal cliff must be averted to protect our economy for future generations. Yesterday, House Speaker JOHN BOEHNER asked the President to identify specific cuts he is willing to make for a balanced approach. I hope the President will take immediate action so progress can be made for a bipartisan solution.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

LESSONS LEARNED IN THE WAKE OF HURRICANE SANDY

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, there are many lessons to be learned in the wake of the hurricane that devastated parts of New York and New Jersey, one of which is the importance of electronic medical records and health information technology.

While many hospitals and medical centers were damaged by the storm, hospitals that employed electronic medical records were able to ensure that vital health information was maintained and not lost. Not only that, electronic medical records enabled continuity of care as patients were transferred between hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, this is just one example of how electronic health records can improve quality of patient care, integrate health systems, and ultimately, reduce unnecessary costs.

My western New York community was an early adopter of electronic medical records and has since been recognized nationally as a leader in health information technology. I urge the House to continue the widespread adoption of health information technology and to assist in its expansion across the country.

□ 1210

TOMBSTONE, ARIZONA, WATER SUPPLY FIASCO

(Mr. GOSAR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GOSAR. Last week, the ninth circuit court heard a case regarding Tombstone, Arizona's right to access its water supply. Last year, a devastating combination of wildfires and monsoons struck Tombstone, leaving only 3 of its 25 springs in operation. Tombstone has been engaged in a year-long standoff with the Federal Government over the repairs that will restore the town's water supply because those springs are in wilderness areas and they are prohibited from using mechanized equipment to make the necessary repairs.

This situation is not unique. A similar disaster occurred in northern Arizona after the 2010 Schultz Pass fire.

The Inner Basin pipeline, infrastructure that delivers water to Flagstaff, was severed during catastrophic floods that followed the fire. In our case, a lawsuit wasn't necessary, but it took my team and the city over a year to persuade multiple agencies to allow for repairs. Last month, I took the first sip of water out of the repaired infrastructure with Mayor Jerry Nabours.

Our communities shouldn't need their Congressman or a lawsuit to make basic repairs to infrastructure. The Federal Government should work with us, not against us, to preserve western water supplies.

FISCAL CLIFF

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, our country faces a critical financial deadline in just 19 days. While Democrats are offering solutions to raise revenue and cut government spending, the House Republican leadership still refuses to take action on something we all agree on—extending middle class tax cuts.

We need to give middle class families in my home State of Rhode Island and across our Nation the certainty that they will not see a tax increase at a time when they can least afford it. I've heard from hundreds of Rhode Islanders who want to know why we don't have a deal already. I've heard from seniors who want us to protect Social Security, working parents who want us to extend tax cuts for the middle class, and those still struggling to find work who rely on unemployment insurance to make ends meet.

It's time for the Republican leadership to work across the aisle to reach a deal that strengthens the middle class and responsibly addresses our debt.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT AND THE LESSER PRAIRIE CHICKEN

(Mr. POMPEO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POMPEO. Today, I rise to talk about a bird, the Lesser Prairie Chicken. Actually, it's not about the bird; it's about jobs. I happen to represent Cassoday, Kansas, the American capital of the Lesser Prairie Chicken.

The Environmental Protection Agency and this administration are about to do great harm to the bird but, more importantly, present great risk to energy exploration all across America. They want to put the Lesser Prairie Chicken under the Endangered Species Act. The impact of this decision will be enormous on our burgeoning domestic energy industry. Millions of public acres could be closed to exploration, and a labyrinth of bureaucratic nightmares awaits any investor foolish enough to explore land that might be home to even one Lesser Prairie Chicken. The uncertainty that listing this

bird would create will discourage investments where they are most needed in our country.

It's time to find a practical, realistic solution to protect our environment and spur economic growth, but manipulating the Endangered Species Act and exploiting the Lesser Prairie Chicken is simply wrong.

INQUIRY INTO THE MURDER OF PATRICK FINUCANE

(Mr. NEAL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, hours ago, British Prime Minister David Cameron told the House of Commons that a report he commissioned acknowledged there was a "shocking level of state collusion" into the murder of Attorney Patrick Finucane in Belfast in 1989.

I appreciate Prime Minister Cameron's recognition that the agents of the British state were involved in the murder of Pat Finucane and his apology to the family, but I will continue to be a strong and outspoken advocate for a full, open, and transparent public inquiry into the case of British collusion in the murder of Pat Finucane. It is the only way to get to the truth and the only way we can convince the public that one of the most controversial murders during the Troubles has been thoroughly investigated.

I have known Geraldine Finucane and her family for more than two decades. Their campaign for justice and truth has been honorable and remarkable. The killing of Patrick Finucane was a dark stain in the north of Ireland, which has not gone away by today's report. The British Government agreed to conduct a full inquiry into the murder at Weston Park, and they should honor that commitment, as Prime Minister Enda Kenny of Ireland has suggested today as well.

As we've seen many times before during the Irish peace process, whether it was the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four, or Bloody Sunday, the truth eventually emerges. Pat Finucane's family deserves to know the whole truth. That is why we will continue to demand that the British Government hold a full public inquiry into the murder of Patrick Finucane.

STOP FOREIGN AID TO TUNISIA

(Mr. WOLF asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was the 3-month anniversary of the terrorist attack in Benghazi, Libya, where four Americans' lives were tragically lost, including U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens. To date, none of the terrorists have been brought to justice. In fact, in the months following the attack, the Tunisian Government blocked the FBI from interviewing the

only known detained suspect in the attack, a Tunisian man named Ali Harzi. The FBI team has been there for 5 weeks, and they will not make him available.

Since January 2011, the U.S. has given more than \$320 million in taxpayer dollars to Tunisia. I rise to ask that all U.S. aid to Tunisia be immediately cut off, in light of the country's blocking the FBI's attempt to investigate the attack and interview Harzi.

Why are we giving any sort of aid to a country that has proven at this time it is no friend or ally of the United States? Why are we not doing everything in our power to investigate the events in Benghazi that killed four Americans?

Should Secretary Clinton fail to cut off aid to Tunisia, I will take legislative action to cut off the aid.

RECOGNIZING JEJ JOHNSON, GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE DEFENSE

(Mr. SMITH of Washington asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Washington. I rise today to recognize the outstanding service of Jeh Johnson, general counsel of the Department of Defense.

In navigating a wide range of important legal issues, Jeh has been an invaluable partner to the House Armed Services Committee over the last 4 years, and he is respected by Members on both sides of the aisle. Over the last 4 years, Jeh has advised the committee on numerous national security challenges, including cyberwarfare, counterterrorism operations, the legal boundaries of the conflict against al Qaeda and its affiliates, sensitive intelligence matters, and detainee operations worldwide. Jeh was integral to our efforts to reform military commissions—where those accused of planning and executing 9/11 attacks will be prosecuted. He has regularly testified before Congress and provided briefings on the Don't Ask, Don't Tell law and policy, efforts to combat sexual assault in the military, changes to the combat exclusion policy, the membership of the Joint Chiefs, and the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq.

There has been no shortage of very difficult and very controversial issues. Jeh has always approached them intelligently and professionally and served this country, the President and Congress well.

The one thing I always noticed about Jeh is he liked coming over and talking to Congress, which is not always the case in the executive branch. He recognized the importance of the relationship between the legislative branch and the executive branch. He has served our country very well.

I wish him well in private practice and thank him for his service.